



Q

*is for Quilting*

Batik Bonanza!

Students make a  
group quilt inspired  
by the art of Batik

Batik Basics

Learn How to make Batik at  
Home

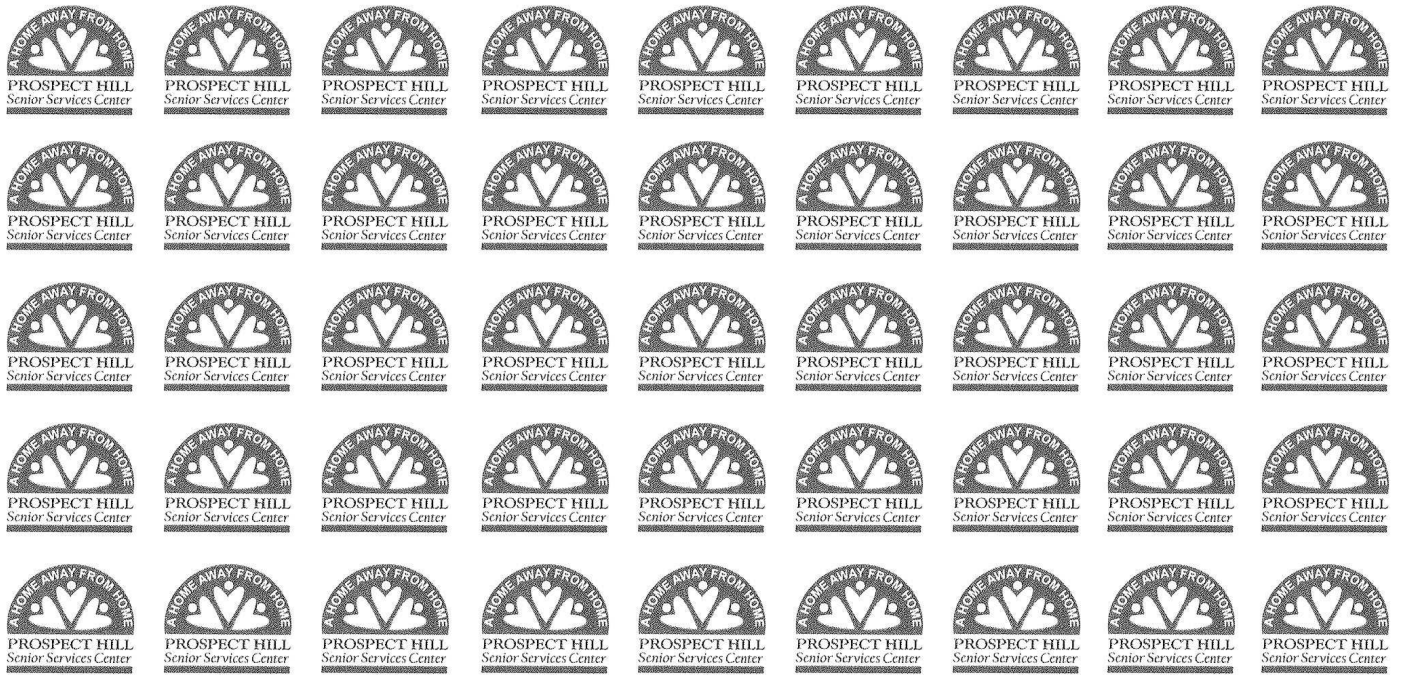
Solo Projects

Students display their first  
finished quilts

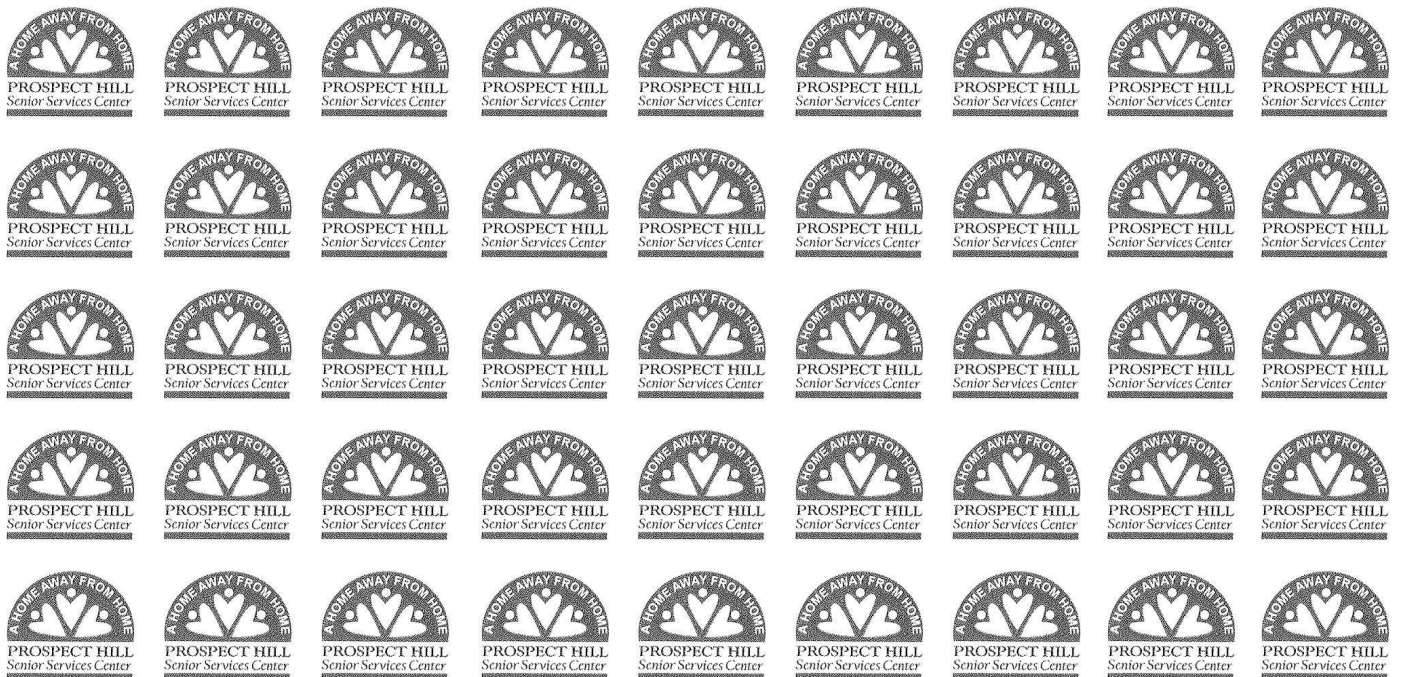
JUNE 2017



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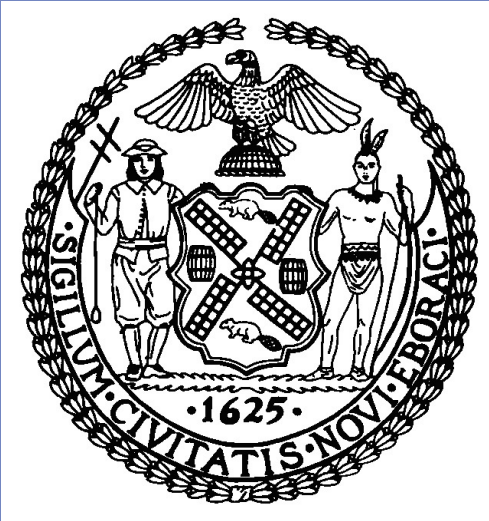
**Thank you**  
**Prospect Hill Senior Services Center**  
**for all of your support, and for truly being**  
**a home away from home for so many!**





Brooklyn  
Arts  
Council

50  
YEARS



"SU-CASA is a collaboration among the New York City Council, the Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA), the Department for the Aging (DFTA) and Brooklyn Arts Council. The program is funded in by New York City Council and we would like to thank Council member Lander for his support. Brooklyn Arts Council (BAC) is proud to administer this program on behalf<sup>2</sup> of the borough of Brooklyn.



# *On The Cover*



This batik block was designed and painted by Lillian R., with commercial batik squares added on two sides.

PHOTO BY C. TRIVETT

## *Batik Basics*

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The Quilting Class at Prospect Hill Senior Center is an ongoing one, and we have learned a number of new skills as each project is introduced. With help from a generous SU-CASA grant, we have launched into a completely new quilting experience that involves designing and painting our own fabric pieces in the batik tradition and then turning them into a group quilt.



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PHOTO BY C. TRIVETT

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PHOTO BY C. TRIVETT

**“ We have launched into a completely new quilting experience that involves designing and painting our own fabric pieces in the batik tradition and then turning them into a group quilt.”**



## *Overheard in Quilting Class...*



**Joe**

**"You ladies keep me young!"**

PHOTO BY **C. TRIVETT**

Above: Jimmy, Dottie and Joe have a laugh. Thanks for the music, guys!

**Reginalda:**

**"You see, teacher, I'm LEARNING!"**

**Suzanne:**

**"If it weren't for this class, I never would have made these things! My fabric scraps are all getting used!"**

**Gladys:**

**"This is my best class!"**



# Q is for Quilting

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Issue #2

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# 2 Years and Counting!



Coleen is a full-time faculty member in the Costume Department of Saint Ann's School in Brooklyn. She is currently writing a scholarly monograph on Burlesque Costume History for Routledge/Taylor and Francis.  
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**I**t is hard to believe two years have gone by spending Thursdays quilting with Seniors!

What started as a desire to spend time with older people has turned into a passion to teach new skills and has led to friendships that I cherish deeply.

The catalyst for this quilting program was my mother and the basic quilting she taught me over the last ten years. She and her quilting friends in Redding, California are still keeping us stocked with free fabrics for projects, and I was very grateful to be able to supplement this supply with batiks and supplies to create our own textiles thanks to funding from a SU-CASA grant via The Brooklyn Arts Council, The New York City Council, The Department of Aging, and The Department of Cultural Affairs.

Even when we have not been fortunate enough to receive grant funding, we volunteer our time most weeks, working on new quilts or individual projects. This year has brought triumphs for many of our students as they finished their first quilts completely on their own, including fully quilting and binding their pieces. We miss our members here and there because of health issues, and we are always very grateful when they are able to return to class. It is inspiring to hear sometimes that this class is a motivator for them to get better!

It has been a privilege to bring batik to these students for a special unit and I hope you enjoy this document of our process. It is an attempt to share what we have done and what we have learned. I hope you get a sense of the joy quilting together brings to our lives.

**Come quilt with us! We'd love to have you!**

COLEEN SCOTT TRIVETT  
Editor-in-Chief



# Machine Quilting Tricks

Lily Moy Leong shares some tips from her experiments with machine quilting.



PHOTO BY C.TRIVETT

Good design is a skill that can be learned in some respects, but certain people do have an inherent eye for color, pattern, and composition. Lily Moy Leong has an art and design background, and she uses these skills in her colorful and detailed quilt designs.

Lili has been a longtime member of the quilting class, which has been meeting for two years at The Prospect Hill Senior Services Center in Park Slope, Brooklyn. She had been introduced to quilting before our class, but she is always experimenting with new techniques and is willing to try anything that our curriculum offers.

We recently received a large donation of half-square triangles, which is a small square quilt block, made of two triangles. Lili was intrigued by this batch of pieces, and has made two completely different quilts using them. With the rectangular piece you see in the image above, Lili played with quilting techniques that added more decorative detail in the white areas of her quilt.

**ABOVE:**  
Lily brings her finished quilt to the class for a show and tell. Students from bottom left: Nilda, Lily, Gaita, Siljke.

“**Lily has an art and design background, and she uses these skills in her colorful and detailed quilt designs.**”

## Making Pattern Pieces

The solution to even quilting can be as simple as cutting a piece of card stock.



Left: A close-up of Lily's quilt showing her card stock templates used for machine quilting more consistent shapes.

PHOTO BY C. TRIVETT

“I was unsure if the lines drawn with an erasable pen for quilting would completely wash out, and it was also difficult to see the line on patterned fabric. So, rather than draw a pattern on the surface, I used a template method, cutting shapes out of an index card. Then I pinned them in place and free-stitched around the shapes. Linking several shapes together formed a pattern. I also used a straight piece as a guide to stitch straight lines. Love that free-stitch foot!”

Lily Moy Leong



# Solo Projects

## Students display their first quilts made start to finish.

Learning to quilt takes time, like any artistic skill. The students at Prospect Hill Senior Services Center have been honing their skills for two full years. It is with pride that several students have finished their very first quilts this year!

In the beginning, our programming was about the basics; namely, how to design a nine-patch block.

From there we learned about altering those blocks to create new shapes and then we learned about other different kinds of blocks.

Students had opportunities to make these blocks by machine or by hand, and all were incorporated into group quilts that have been raffled as fundraisers for the center. We moved on from these basics to explore modern applique techniques and strip quilts. The strip quilt



PHOTO BY C TRIVETT

concept involves sewing many long strips together, and then cutting them into shorter lengths that create a random striped quilt.

Students learned how to machine quilt by sewing the lines of these strip projects. Many made table runners with this technique. After the strip quilting, students were ready for more of a challenge.

It was time to make full

quilts. We have started fairly small; these quilts average about 48"x60", which is still a difficult size to maneuver in our small machines. In the past, all of the quilting and binding of our projects has been done by Coleen, but it was time to pass those skills on to the students.

Machine quilting has been made just a little easier with the use of a walking foot to help keep stitches even as the machine goes over

This binding is made of straight strips of fabric that have been joined on the bias and then folded in half. There are special tricks to give the corners a nice miter, and students have attempted this in their projects.

Overall, the quilting process from design to finish is a detailed one, and requires both patience and enthusiasm to complete. It is with great pride that we share some of our finished projects here.



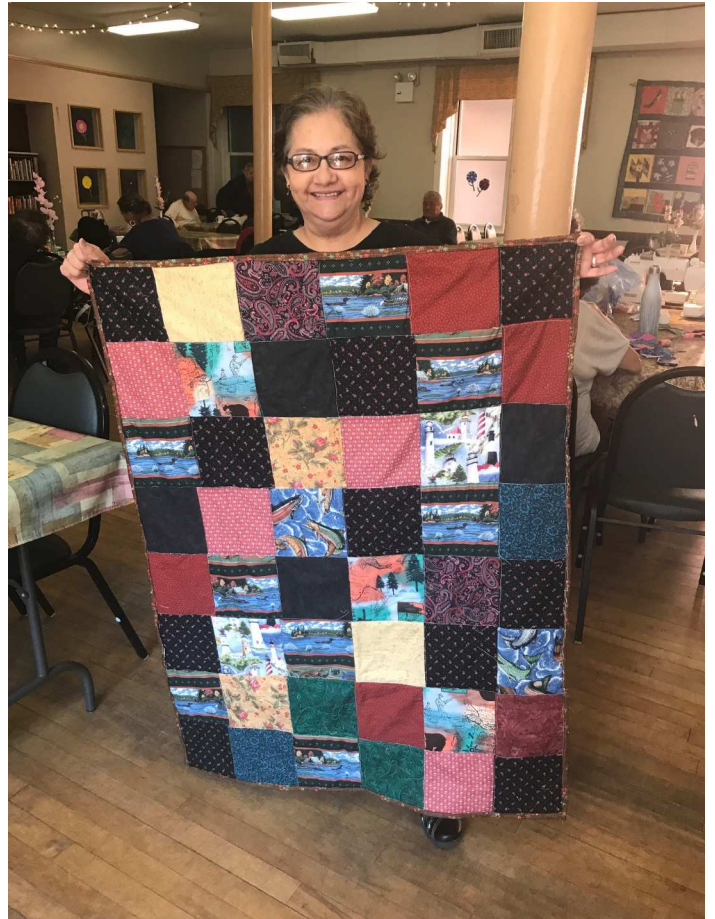
**IMAGES: (CLOCKWISE FROM OPPOSITE PAGE)**

**GAITA:** Gaita wanted to create a quilt to give her granddaughter before she moved away for school. She likes the color green, and this original pattern was created by her.

**REGINALDA:** Reginalda was reluctant to make a whole quilt, but with encouragement, she got very excited to design it. She had some challenges putting it together, but she has learned so much! She chose fabrics that incorporated fishing and nature because it reminds her of her husband.

**LILIAN:** Lillian loved the sunflower print she found and had a great time mixing her fabrics to create this patchwork quilt. Her biggest challenge was the corners on her bindings, but in the end, everything looks beautiful!

**LILY:** Lily wanted to make use of a huge donation of 3" squares and half square triangle pieces that were given to the group. She collected colors she liked and created her blocks separately, saving them in the individual pages of an art portfolio before she put them together. Her border is a Marimekko fabric given to her by a friend.



**SEE MORE FINISHED PROJECTS AT OUR FINAL SHOW ON JUNE 29!**





# *Each Stitch is a Decision*

*By Suzanne Jasper*



Above: A hand-sewn quilt by Suzanne;  
this is one of many she has completed in  
our class at PHSSC

IMAGES BY C. TRIVETT

**T**iny geometric pieces of cotton fabric are cut and arranged into a pattern. Then they are sewn together. Gradually-gradually-a new fabric is created. The top layer of a new quilt. The overall design emerges as the work progresses. It is never every exactly the way it was imagined before starting. This is part of the magic. I like the process. What's it going to look like when it's done? I don't quilt to have a quilt or to finish a quilt. I quilt because I like to quilt. Having a nice quilt with a piece of a dress I wore in high school, a piece of a blouse I had as a young married woman, and a piece of the lining of my son's childhood toy box is just an added bonus. I work completely by hand. The only equipment required to make a wonderful work of art is one very nice needle worth less than a dollar. That one needle does all the work.

Will this stitch look like the stitch before? Will it be spaced correctly? Will it be the right length, even though the needle is going through twice as many layers of fabric on this stitch? Will the pattern of the stitches complement the pattern of the pieces of fabric? These are the considerations of the person who quilts by hand, and most of them are not considerations of the person who machine quilts.

The hand is human. The human hand makes mistakes. The stitching is not exactly even. It takes a very long time. But to me it is warm, jolly, and a wonderful challenge. It gives me great peace and great joy to use up my old fabrics to make something beautiful, one slightly imperfect stitch at a time.



A close-up of Suzanne's hand quilting.

*"I don't quilt to have a quilt or to finish a quilt. I quilt because I like to quilt."*



# For the Love of it!

Teaching assistant Dottie McCoy shares her experience working with seniors and why she does it.

How and why did you get involved with this program?

D: I got involved with this program at first to help fill in when Coleen needed assistance, but after a few visits I came to love working with the ladies at Prospect Hill. I soon started coming as often as I could and then made it a priority in my calendar. I look forward to my Thursday mornings every week, they are my highlight.

What are your thoughts on this program, regarding what it does for you and for the older persons involved?

D: Giving back to the community through creative arts and passing on the skills I learned from my mother and grandmother is unexpectedly rewarding. Watching the women at Prospect Hill grow in their skills and get excited about creating the projects we work on, is a pure joy. Many of them came in never having used a sewing machine and now they can't wait to start the next project and get behind the machine. Seeing the excitement in their faces when they have completed a project is exactly why I continue to be a part of this program.



WRITTEN BY DOTTIE MCCOY  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **C. TRIVETT**





WORKING TOGETHER: Teaching Assistants Cyndi Freeman and Dottie McCoy create their own projects while helping students.



# Batik

## Basics

Article by  
**Coleen Scott Trivett**

Photos by  
**Coleen Scott Trivett**

“ **The result is a beautiful piece of custom designed fabric that can be applied to quilting or other objects such as a pillow or coin purse.**”



**B**atik is a rich fabric dyeing tradition with roots in India, Sri Lanka and Indonesia. Fabrics are intricately painted with wax and dyed multiple times to achieve amazingly detailed prints.

The batik unit for Seniors has been adapted for a classroom setting, which avoids the use of hot wax or dye. Instead, a washable gel glue and acrylic paint replace these messy and potentially dangerous materials. Even with this simplification, the result is a beautiful piece of custom designed fabric that can be applied to quilting or other objects such as a pillow or coin purse.

Traditional batiks are sold in panels or small yardage lengths, and commonly have a repeated pattern, sometimes with a border. There are storytelling and more modern art batiks that focus on one central image. Students were encouraged to try both of these styles- an overall pattern, and a central image. Some of the finished patterned pieces were then cut into smaller blocks to make up the "stained-glass" looking blocks on our finished quilt.

The next page shows a step by step of the process that students followed to create their own batik fabrics.





- 1** Supplies needed: Blue gel glue, muslin or light colored cotton fabric, wax paper, tape, a photocopied or dark lined illustration, pencil (optional) acrylic paint, paint brushes, paper towels, water.
- 2** Reginalda traces her design with a pencil first
- 3** Lili L. traces her design with blue gel glue.
- 4** After the glue dries, the design gets painted with watered-down acrylic paint. You can paint in specific areas of the design, or cover the whole piece of fabric with paint.
- 5** Let the paint dry, then soak in warm water for at least 20 minutes, and rinse away the glue and excess paint. Once rinsed by hand, the piece can be gently washed in a machine on delicate. You can air or machine dry.

Opposite page: A finished batik piece incorporated into a quilt block.



# Our Quilt: Batik Bonanza!

This colorful piece demonstrates our new skills in quilt design and building as we created our own batik fabrics for a group quilt project.



Article by **Coleen Scott Trivett**  
Photography by **C. Trivett**

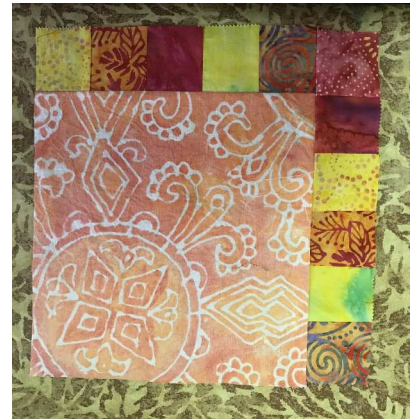
**T**he quilting tradition is rich in multicultural influences, and textile designs are part of what give a quilt uniqueness. It is only fitting that we explore the batik fabric of Indonesia for our current project, not only because of its beauty and tradition, but also because it is a widely used type of fabric in modern quilting. There were two goals in learning about batiks and creating our own textiles: one- to recognize that we can create our own fabrics for an original product and lower materials cost, and two- to learn about this rich tradition of fabric art and find inspiration in its beauty.

The quilting fabric industry is a multi-million dollar one, due to the current popularity of quilting, and the commercialization of fabrics, notions, and sewing machine advances. There are trends in cotton quilting fabrics and techniques just as there are trends in fashion fabric and garment styles. We mustn't forget that the two are intertwined because they are

both influencing the textile industry.

Average high-quality quilting cotton sells for \$12 per yard. This can get exorbitant when one considers that the standard lap sized quilt will use an average of 4 yards of fabric plus a layer of batting that can range in price depending on desired material with polyester being the least expensive, and silk being the most costly.

Commercial quilting batik is produced by hand, just like the finer quality batik pieces that can be found in the markets of Indonesia. The more refined, traditional batik has intricate patterns that are hand-drawn and then hand blocked in wax. The fabric is dyed multiple times, with wax details added or removed before the fabric is dipped in a new color. These fabrics are used for clothing and décor. They are not usually cut into pieces like a commercial textile.



This quilt block is made with a batik fabric created in class and small pieces of commercial batik fabrics.

**“Commercial quilting batik is produced by hand, just like the finer quality batik pieces that can be found in the markets of Indonesia.”**





BATIK BONANZA! Above: The finished product; a quilt made up of handmade fabrics in combination with colorful pieces of batik remnants.



# Batik Bonanza

## continued...



In commercial practice, multiple colors are often applied to a fabric before the wax is added, and this wax print is very often a stamp that is placed in a repeat pattern on the fabric. The wax is removed and additional color is added.

After studying these batik traditions, the class then applied its principles of color and pattern to our simplified project. Through this exercise students learned that they could take a standard piece of cotton, muslin fabric, which averages \$4 per yard, and turn it into a custom print to be used in a quilt. As mentioned in the instructions on page 16, students could create fabric with a central image or an all-over pattern. Pieces could then be used as a main block, or cut into smaller squares and incorporated into smaller blocks needed for this quilt design.

Stained-glass windows inspired the design for this quilt, and the individual quilt blocks are similar in construction though they vary in size. The concept is one larger block surrounded on two sides by small blocks. This allows for all blocks to be rotated within larger pieces of the quilt to create more variety and asymmetry, which you can see in our final project.



**E**ach student who

participated in the creation of the Batik Bonanza quilt created one block with their large batik sample, and one block made of four smaller blocks, which could combine both commercial and hand-made original fabrics. These two blocks were to be inspired by each other in color sensibility. This concept helped the final quilt to be very color balanced because every large block has a counterpart.

There is no denying that traditional batik is an art form that takes years to master, and specialized training using the tools and materials that have been passed on for centuries. We could not master a technique this difficult in our short unit, of course, but we do hope that the influence of these

stunning fabrics is apparent in our samples, and we are proud of the final result- a vivid and diverse quilt inspired by Indonesian batik.

If you are inspired to learn more about the Indonesian batik tradition, please use this link to view

*Indonesia Batik: A Living Tradition*, a video by UNESCO. (link: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wylWYSHkzoQ&list=PLQIOG5xBohXBc2iK-t4\\_YbWo9aLZF27Ej&index=6](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wylWYSHkzoQ&list=PLQIOG5xBohXBc2iK-t4_YbWo9aLZF27Ej&index=6))

This batik programming would not be possible without generous grant funding from SU-CASA.



An example of traditional Indonesian batik.









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